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## Atomic Secrecy

Dr. Ralph Lapp, a noted atomic scientist, has accused the Atomic Energy Commission of withholding from the American people the fact that Russia has detonated a dozen nuclear devices within the past year. His charge—if true—indicates that an administration which came to power as a foe of "paternalism" in government may have adopted a "father knows best" attitude toward the people's right to be informed.

One possible reason advanced by Dr. Lapp for the AEC's withholding of facts is that if the people knew too much of Russia's atomic capabilities, they might "resist a balanced budget." This may or may not be true. For our part we do not feel that the American people want a balanced budget at the price of creating a risk to national security.

Dr. Lapp's criticisms go directly to the charge of one-man rule which has been leveled before against AEC Chairman Lewis L. Strauss. The AEC was conceived as a non-partisan, consultative body whose members would share equally in its far-reaching decisions. Critics of Dr. Strauss have said that he withheld facts not only from the people but from his fellow commissioners at times. And on at least one celebrated occasion, the AEC was brought into the most partisan of domestic political issues.

Three government agencies, above all others, should be kept out of politics. They are the AEC, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Through the firm resolution of its director, Allen W. Dulles, the CIA has avoided any such implication. But within the past two years, both the FBI and the AEC have been brought into political controversies by policy decisions of high administration appointees.

The Democratic Party, with the people's help, could have no higher goal than seeking to make certain that this doesn't happen again.

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